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Thai Restaurant Week (April 13-19, 2009)

Celebrating Thai New Year

For the second year in a row, the Office of Commercial Affairs of the Royal Thai Embassy has organized Thai Restaurant Week to celebrate *Songkran*, or Thai New Year, April 13-19. Twenty-six Washington, DC-area Thai restaurants will celebrate Songkran, each in its own unique way, offering special menus, discounts, or traditional Thai New Year's performances.

Throughout the week, patrons will have an opportunity to taste special dishes the participating restaurants chefs are preparing to celebrate the Thai New Year. Diners who visit more than one restaurant will enjoy a wide array of delicious offerings and experience the sensory delights of Thai food.

Along with New Year's cuisine, patrons may participate in free drawings sponsored by each restaurant, including dining certificates. This year's grand prize will be a trip for two to Thailand.

For further information on Thai Restaurant Week, coupons for discounts on lunches or dinners during the week, and the history and significance of Songkran, please visit <http://oca.thaiembdc.org>.

Participating Restaurants:

Washington, DC

- Asia Nine (www.asianine.com)
915 E Street, NW, Washington, DC Phone: 202-629-4355
- Bangkok Bistro (www.bangkokbistrodc.com)
3251 Prospect St., NW, Washington, DC Phone: 202-337-2424
- Bangkok Joes (www.bangkokjoes.com)
3000 K Street, NW, Washington, DC Phone: 202-333-4422
- Mai Thai (www.maithai.us)
1200 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC Phone: 202-452-6870
- Tara Thai (<http://www.tarathaexpress.com/dc.html>)
4849 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC Phone: 202-363-4141
- Thai Phoon (www.thaiphoon.com)
2011 S St., NW, Washington, DC Phone: 202-667-3505
- Thai Tanic (www.thaitanic.us)
1326-A 14th St., NW, Washington, DC Phone: 202-588-1795

Maryland

- Ban Thai (www.banthai.us)
340 N Charles Street, Baltimore, MD Phone: 410-727-7971
- Bangkok Garden (www.bkkkgarden.com)
4906 St. Elmo Ave., Bethesda, MD Phone: 301-951-0670
- Bangkok Garden (www.bkkkgarden.com)
5810 Robert Oliver Pl., Columbia, MD Phone: 410-992-9553
- Pana Thai (www.panathairestaurant.com)
7224 Muncaster Mill Road, Derwood, MD Phone: 301-990-8501
- Tara Asia (<http://www.tarathairichmond.com/locations.html>)
99-D E. Montgomery Ave., Rockville, MD
Phone: 301-315-8005
- Tara Thai (<http://www.tarathairichmond.com/locations.html>)
4828 Bethesda Ave., Bethesda, MD Phone: 301-657-0488
- Tara Thai (<http://www.tarathairichmond.com/locations.html>)
12071 Rockville Pike, Rockville MD Phone: 301-231-9899
- Tara Thai (<http://www.tarathairichmond.com/locations.html>)
9811 Washingtonian Blvd., Gaithersburg, MD Phone: 301-947-8330
- Thai Pavilion (www.thaipavilionrestaurant.com)
29 Maryland Ave., Unit 308, Rockville, MD Phone: 301-545-0244

Virginia

- Born (www.bornrestaurant.com)
144 Maple Avenue W., Vienna, VA Phone: 703-255-5800
- Chao Phra Ya (<http://www.chaophrayathai.com>)
2465 J-I Centreville Rd., Herndon, VA Phone: 703-713-0103
- Duangrat's (www.duangrats.com)
5878 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA Phone: 703-820-5775
- Mai Thai (www.maithai.us)
6 King St., Alexandria, VA Phone: 703-548-0600
• Rabieng (www.duangrats.com/rabieng.html)
5892 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA Phone: 703-671-4222
- T.H.A.I. in Shirlington (www.thaiinshirlington.com)
4029 Campbell Avenue, Arlington, VA Phone: 703-931-3203
- Tara Thai (<http://www.tarathairichmond.com/locations.html>)
226 Maple Ave. W., Vienna, VA Phone: 703-255-2467
- Tara Thai (<http://www.tarathairichmond.com/locations.html>)
4001 N. Fairfax Dr., Arlington, VA Phone: 703-908-4999
- Tara Thai (<http://www.tarathairichmond.com/locations.html>)
7501-E Leesburg pike, Falls Church, VA Phone: 703-506-9788
- Tara Thai (www.tarathairichmond.com)
11800 W. Broad St., Richmond, VA Phone: 804-360-0001
- Thai Phoon (www.thaiphoon.com)
1301 S. Joyce St., Arlington, VA Phone: 703-413-8200



Thai New Year – Songkran (สงกรานต์)

The Songkran Festival is the sacred and time-honored New Year's festival for the people of Thailand, originally set by astrological measures but now celebrated on April 13-15 of every year.

Traditionally, it is a time for Thai people to cleanse and renew their spirits, to honor their elders and, as a society with deep agrarian roots, to celebrate and give thanks for the coming spring rain. Many Songkran celebrants will visit a "Wat," or Buddhist temple, to pray and pay homage to Buddha and to give food to the local monks and other ascetics that reside there.



Image Courtesy of the Tourism Authority of Thailand

Songkran is celebrated during the hottest time in Thailand and traditionally involved the gentle sprinkling of water in temples or the pouring of scented water over religious shrines and Buddha statues to cleanse his venerated image – all in the hopes of bringing into the household good luck and prosperity for the New Year.

While these old rituals are still followed, many modern Thais have come to embrace the more familiar practice of playfully splashing water, sometimes mixed with talcum powder or jasmine, on one another using small buckets or even modern water guns. These showery exchanges last all day on Songkran – a good way to beat the heat in what is normally the warmest month of the year.

Songkran in the Washington, DC Area

The most popular Songkran celebration site in the Washington, DC area is at the Thai Buddhist Temple – "Wat Thai DC" in Silver Spring, MD. Each year the Temple hosts a festival where thousands of attendees celebrate the New Year by spending time with friends and relatives, enjoying traditional Thai cuisine from the Temple food fair, and of course, in prayer.



Image Courtesy of the Tourism Authority of Thailand

The Office of Commercial Affairs of the Royal Thai Embassy has organized Thai Restaurant Week to celebrate The Thai New Year (Songkran) on April 13-19 together with 26 Thai restaurants in the Washington metro area. Each restaurant will celebrate Songkran in its own unique way, offering special menus, discounts, or traditional Thai New Year's performances.